

EDITORIAL.

THE RECENT upheavals in nomenclature, culminating in the work of Otto Kuntze, are too well known to need recapitulation. It had become evident to most botanists that some agreement must be reached or confusion would become worse confounded. This feeling found public expression in Europe in the circular recently issued from Berlin,¹ containing certain propositions which were submitted to working botanists for their signature. It is presumed that the results thus obtained were to be presented to the International Congress at Genoa. In this country a circular with the same purpose was sent out from New York and Washington, and was the means of discovering among botanists a wide-spread desire for an agreement upon matters of nomenclature. It was felt that work in systematic botany was losing force amidst the uncertainties of nomenclature, and that almost any laws were preferable to the existing chaos.

THE TIME therefore seemed ripe at the Rochester meeting of the Botanical Club for an attempt to reach some mutual understanding. As is shown in the account of the meeting, the attendance of botanists who have to deal with nomenclature was unusually large, and it was felt to be representative, especially when taken in connection with letters containing expressions of opinion from many who were absent. The subject was not sprung in a formal meeting, but about twenty-five botanists, representing every shade of opinion, met informally and thoroughly and frankly discussed every point. Every one was ready to make concessions for the sake of agreement, and the principles finally adopted represent a resultant of various concessions. It was felt that this amicable feeling must be strengthened by an immediate agreement of some kind, and that various details could be arranged afterwards. The principles proposed were adopted by the Botanical Club with remarkable unanimity, the only real question raised being as to the advisability of so rigidly restricting the publication of species, some thinking that distributed specimens bearing a name should be included.

IN THE OPINION of the GAZETTE the paper adopted represents a thoroughly wise compromise, alike honorable to all concerned in its preparation, as witnessing a far greater desire to steady nomenclature than to hold fast to individual opinion. This is the spirit in which it should be received by all American botanists, and small differences of opinion should be lost sight of for the general good.

THIS ACTION of American botanists will be presented at Genoa, as

¹See this journal for August, p. 267.

representing their proposition in the direction of an international agreement. As it is not widely different from the Berlin propositions some agreement may be reached, but we should not be too sanguine concerning this. If the Genoa Congress adopts a set of principles so little at variance with our own that complete agreement is possible, the standing committee is authorized to submit the matter to a vote (by mail) of the American botanists.

IT WAS a wise thing to appoint a standing committee to prepare a tentative list of the flowering plants of the so-called "Manual range" under the rules adopted and present it at the next meeting of the Club or of the new Botanical Section of the American Association. This will give the most conspicuous example of the working of these rules that could be selected from our flora, and botanists can have before them a concrete illustration, and can then determine whether the principles adopted work reasonably well or not. In the opinion of the GAZETTE the changes that will follow in Manual names will be much fewer than many suppose.

IN THIS CONNECTION it may be well to call attention to a single provision of the adopted rules; which is, to make 1753 (Linn. *Sp. Plant.*, ed. 1) as the common point of departure for both genera and species. This will do away with a number of generic names that have been recently revived, and is better in this regard than the Berlin proposition, which takes the fourth edition of Linnæus' *Genera Plantarum* (1752) as the point of departure for genera. If the 1753 date is adopted at Genoa, the list of genera which are proposed by the Berlin circular as exceptions will be shortened, and in fact so few that concern American botanists will be left that they should not be considered when involving a dangerous precedent.

THE ROCHESTER MEETING bids fair to mark an epoch for American botanists. Not only was an agreement concerning nomenclature reached, but botany was dignified by being made a distinct section of the American Association. It will be long before section G sounds as home-like as section F, but as the botanists were suing for the divorce it was graceful to leave the house in the possession of zoology. However, the divorce is not complete, for provision was made by which joint sessions are to be held for hearing papers of general biological interest. The GAZETTE has so frequently given the reasons that have been urged for this separation that they must be familiar. The same reasons were overwhelmingly evident at Rochester, where the flood of botanical papers was beyond all precedent. The botanists are now responsible for a section, and they can begin the preparation of papers for the next meeting in the full assurance of having not only time for a hearing, but also for discussion.

THE ACTION of the Botanical Club, of course fully representing the new section G, in reference to the International Botanical Congress in connection with the Columbian Exposition, was thoroughly prudent. By correspondence and by personal investigation it had become sufficiently evident that a very meager representation of European botanists could be expected, and that nothing was to be gained by coöperation with the World's Congress Auxiliary. It seemed somewhat absurd to call a meeting of American botanists an "International Congress." However, the attractions of the year are to be taken advantage of, and foreign botanists urged to attend the meeting of the Botanical Club, which has a committee appointed to do all it can towards making their stay pleasant and profitable.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The lower cryptogams.¹

Professor Ludwig of Greiz is known as one of the most energetic German students of the mutual relations between plants and animals, and of the fungi, especially those connected with some of the obscure gum diseases of trees. For a series of years he has reviewed mycological literature for Just's Jahresbericht, which has caused him to become quite familiar with the work being done by specialists in that field, so that his text-book is unusually rich in references to recent work. The book is essentially a review of the thallophytes, with especial reference to economic questions, nearly 600 pages being devoted to the fungi, and only about one-tenth as much to the algæ, inclusive of lichens. A full index makes reference to the cryptogams themselves, as well as host plants, etc., quite easy, although the hosts are indexed only under their common names. The book appears to be carefully and well written.—W. T.

Minor notices.

PROFESSOR GREENE'S *Pittonia* (vol. II, pt. 11; May-Aug., 1892) contains a very interesting paper upon Dr. Kuntze and his reviewers, chiefly the latter. The reviewers referred to are Hemsley (*Nature*), Jackson (*Jour. Bot.*), Britton (*Bull. Torr. Bot. Club*), and Schumann

¹LUDWIG, FRIEDRICH.—Lehrbuch der niederen Kryptogamen, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung derjenigen Arten, die für den Menschen von Bedeutung sind, oder in Aeushalte der Natur eine hervorragende Rolle spielen.—8vo, pp. xvi+672. Stuttgart, Enke, 1892.